

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9286
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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BRUSSELS FOR USEC

PARIS FOR USOECD

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, JA
SUBJECT: MAY UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES

REF: TOKYO 9843

1. FIGURES RELEASED BY PRIMIN'S OFFICE JUNE 30 INDICATED THAT NUMBER OF EMPLOYED IN MAY, 1.23 MILLION, REMAINED SAME AS IN APRIL BUT THAT SEASONAL ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATE REACHED 2.3 PERCENT, HIGHEST SINCE JUNE 1959. PRIMIN'S OFFICE, IN INTERPRETING FIGURES TO PRESS, CHOSE TO EMPHASIZE, HOWEVER, THAT TOTAL EMPLOYMENT OF 55.32 MILLION IN MAY, A 1.19 MILLION INCREASE OVER PREVIOUS MONTH AND 1.02 MILLION INCREASE OVER MAY 1977, EXCEEDED 55 MILLION FOR FIRST TIME. NUMBER OF WAGE AND SALARY EARNERS REACHED 37.94 MILLION, A SLIGHT DECREASE FROM APRIL BUT A 160,000 INCREASE OVER MAY 1977. IN ADDITION, EMPLOYMENT
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IN MANUFACTURING AND IN CONSTRUCTION SECTORS CONTINUED TO RISE. AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED PER WEEK INCREASED TO 48.1 FROM APRIL FIGURE OF 45.9 MARKING FIRST TIME THAT FIGURE EXCEEDED 48 HOURS SINCE MAY 1974. WHILE RATIO OF JOB OFFERS TO JOB SEEKERS DECREASED SLIGHTLY TO .53, NUMBER OF JOB OFFERS, PARTICULARLY THOSE MADE TO NEW ENTRANTS INTO THE LABOR FORCE INCREASED SIZABLY.

2. COMMENT: WHILE STATISTICAL EVIDENCE AS PROVIDED BY LABOR FORCE FIGURES IS STILL SOMEWHAT SCANTY, GOJ IS CONTINUING TO CLAIM, AS IT HAS SINCE PATTERN OF SPRING WAGE SETTLEMENTS SET IN MID-APRIL, THAT EMPLOYMENT AS WELL AS OTHER ECONOMIC INDICATORS REFLECT IMPROVED ECONOMIC PICTURE IN GENERAL AND FAVORABLE INFLUENCE OF EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAM IN PARTICULAR. MANSFIELD

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